

## TOWN OF MADISON - PUBLIC NOTICE

The Inhabitants of the Town of Madison are hereby notified of a public meeting, The time, place and purpose of which are as follows:

**MINUTES  
BOARD OF ASSESSORS  
Monday December 28, 2015  
5:30 p.m. – Old Point School Meeting Room**

- A. Call to order: Meeting was called to order at 5:31pm. Chairman Veneziano was absent, Vice Chairman Ducharme, Assessors Johnson, Fortin, and Edgerly were present. Also in attendance were Town Manager Tim Curtis and Assessing Agent Shirley Bartlett.
- B. Discuss acceptance of meeting minutes of October 12, 2015 & November 2, 2015: Motion from Mr. Edgerly to accept the October 12<sup>th</sup> minutes with corrections and the November 2<sup>nd</sup> minutes, seconded by Mr. Fortin. Motion carried 4-0.
- C. Old Business: None
- D. New Business
  - 1. Review Abatement Requests: The Board reviewed three abatement requests.
    - a. Rowan & Oak Properties requested an abatement on account #906 Map 20, Lot 114 (165 Main Street). Shirley Bartlett reviewed the property and recommended a reduction in value of \$50,800 due to less than optimum conditions such as no heating system and a roof in need of repair. Assessor Ducharme clarified that the value was being reduced from \$162,800 to \$112,000. Shirley noted that the owners are currently renovating the property. She will assess it again in the spring and the renovations may result in an increase in property value. Assessor Edgerly motioned to accept the Assessing Agent's recommendation of a reduction in value of \$50,800 resulting in a reduction in tax of \$990.60 for account #906, seconded by Mr. Fortin. Motion carries 4-0.
    - b. Donna Deyva requested an abatement on account #2206 Map 7 Lot 55-2 (888 Lakewood Road). Shirley explained that the trailer has not been lived in for several years and has mold issues and she recommended a reduction in value of \$21,600 from \$35,900 to \$14,300. Assessor Ducharme raised a concern that taxpayers shouldn't let their properties fall into disrepair just to ask for a reduction in taxes. Shirley pointed out that the property owner will lose more in the value of the property due to the condition than they would save in the abatement. The Town Manager added that the Assessing Agent's job is primarily to assess current condition regardless of how it came to be. Motion from Mr. Fortin to accept the Assessing Agent's recommendation of a reduction in value of \$21,600 resulting in a reduction in tax of \$421.20 for account #2206, seconded by Mr. Edgerly. Motion carries 4-0.

- c. Robert Layng requested an abatement on account #2368 Map 42 Lot 20 (176 Whittier Farm Road). He recently purchased this property site unseen and was disappointed to find that a good portion of the property is not usable because of a natural swale that runs through it depositing runoff water into the lake. Shirley has visited the property and she provided the board with maps to show its location and size in proximity of the neighboring lots. She also mentioned that she confirmed with the Code Enforcement Officer that the land allows for the same amount of buildable area as the other lots along the shore. Shirley recommended a reduction in value of \$23,500 which included a building reduction of \$7,900 and a land reduction of \$15,600. There was a good deal of discussion regarding the size of the lot for the valuation as this lot has 120 feet of water front compared to the neighboring lots that have approximately 60 feet. Assessor Fortin expressed concern about lowering the value of the land because it would be inconsistent with the value of the smaller lots. Mr. Fortin added that the swale actually provided a value of privacy for the lot. Assessor Johnson motioned to accept the Assessing Agent's recommendation of a reduction in value of \$23,500, but the motion fails due to lack of a second.

Assessor Edgerly motioned to accept the Assessing Agent's recommendation of a reduction in value of the building only of \$7,900, but to leave the value of the land at \$163,000, resulting in a reduction in tax of \$154.05, seconded by Mr. Fortin. Shirley mentioned that her conversations with the property owner indicated that he was going to appeal the board's decision if he did not receive an abatement in the neighborhood of \$60,000. Motion carries 4-0. The owner has 60 days to appeal the Board's decision to the County Commissioners.

2. Discuss BETE & Personal Property Taxes: As part of continuing education the Board reviewed the State's Business Equipment Tax Exemption program (BETE). Shirley provided a list of the 215 businesses in Madison that make up the \$59M in taxable personal property. The list included those businesses which participated in BETE which exempts an additional \$29M from local taxation. The Town Manager explained that Madison receives a reimbursement from the state for a portion of the lost tax revenue equal to approximately 80% of the revenue.

Shirley also provided the board with a letter from Maine Revenue services recapping the changes to tax law enacted by the 127<sup>th</sup> Legislature, including changes to the Homestead Exemption which will allow for eligible property owners to receive an increase in the exemption from \$10,000 to \$15,000 in the next fiscal year. While this may be good for some property owners Shirley estimated that it will cost the Town about \$54,000 in tax revenue.

3. Discuss Tax Rate Projections: The Town Manager had asked for a few minutes on the agenda to review with the Assessors some figures for estimating the tax rate for the coming fiscal year. By maintaining a valuation of approximately \$365M, the total commitment would have to remain under \$7,100,000 to maintain the current tax rate of \$19.50 per thousand. To drop the rate 1 point would require a reduction in commitment of \$430,000.00. Food for thought as the budget process begins in a few months.

E. Assessors Concerns: None

F. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn at 6:30pm.